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SENSITIVE  
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SUBJECT: Police Detain Journalist Affiliated with Arrested Hanoi  
Blogger

REF: HANOI 805

CLASSIFIED BY: Harry Kamian, Political Counselor; REASON: 1.4(B), (D)

¶1. (C) A journalist and editor from the popular online news website VietNamNet, Pham Doan Trang, was taken into police custody August 29 for activities connected with Hanoi blogger Bui Thanh Hieu's plot to print T-shirts with anti-China slogans (reftel). VietNamNet's owner, Nguyen Anh Tuan was informed August 31 of Ms. Trang's detention and told that it had nothing to do with any of the articles that Trang and written or edited, according to a high-level VietNamNet employee. One of Hieu's associates, dissident lawyer Le Quoc Quan (protect) told us that Hieu and Trang had at one time been romantically involved, and that Hieu had asked Trang to act as an intermediary in passing the money along for the T-shirts to be printed.

¶2. (C) COMMENT: Although Trang may have played a supporting role in the T-shirt episode, she has not shied away from sensitive topics in her own reporting. In July, for example, she wrote a piece examining the conduct of Vietnam's leaders during the 1954 Geneva Accords. She has also recently written about China's territorial claims in the South China Sea, a sore nerve for many in Vietnam's Party and government. END COMMENT.  
MICHALAK